AN EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN A SOUTH AFRICAN MUNICIPALITY

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Abstract: The envisaged paper was to evaluate the implementation of training and development programme in a South African Municipality. The study adopted a Qualitative research approach. Primary data was collected from 20 participants by using a semi structured interviews. The study objective was to evaluate the implementing of training and development programme in the municipality. The results revealed that employees are assisted to focus and helped to improve on their performance and further build confidence amongst employees and team development which contribute to better organisation morale. It was recommended that the management should introduce a proper procedure to be followed when selecting suitable employees to attend the training, and that training audit should be used to assess the effectiveness of the training thereafter.

Key words: *Training, development, Municipality, Evaluation, and Human Resource Management*

INTRODUCTION

The public sector in South Africa is faced with many different challenges especially in terms of the management and implementation of the training and development strategies. It goes without a doubt that the success of any organisation fully depends on the performance of the employees. Thus, it become the responsibility of any organisation to ensure that its employees are trained and developed effectively in order to carry out the mandate of that organisation. Failure to develop employees through training might have a huge negative effect on the organisation. This goes beyond the issue of poor performance but also to retain such employees. Today most employees consider development and training before deciding to settle with an employer. Lack of these factors might results in the organisation loosing many qualified employees to other competing institutions.

Thus, it is a wise choice for any organisation to develop and train their employees for one or more reasons, some of the reasons could include retaining employees, or for increasing their knowledge which could have a positive impact on their performance which mostly automatically influence their production in their day to day operations. The development or existence of the South African Qualifications Authority Act, No. 58 of 1995, the Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998 and the Skills Development Levies Act, No. 9 of 1999 were developed to give direction to policies and rules that are used to categorise and control public servants to guarantee effective service delivery.

All organisations need to train and develop their employees if they wish to achieve their organisational goals and objectives. Furthermore, organisations are acquainted of this requirement and invest effort and other resources in training and development. On that note those investments can take the form of employing specialist to train and develop employees. This paper reviewed related literature on training and development. It further discusses the methodology adopted in the study and also present the findings and analysis of the study.

TRAINING, AND DEVELOPMENT DEFINED

Goldstein & Ford [1], state that training is intentional and is implemented to meet an identified need of

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improving a skill in a particular area, and the improvement is measured by the changes that are implemented in the work environment. The authors suggest that even though training is not a solution for all challenges that the institution faces, a well-constructed training programme can yield favourable outcomes, as long as both the individual and the institution are positive about the training programmes, as both will benefit in the form of skills and opportunities. Training is regarded by Coetzee [2], as a specific means of facilitating the learning process and as a planned, short-term attempt to change the competencies, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge or behaviour through learning experiences in order to achieve effective performance.

Van Dyk et al. [3], argues that training is an important component of the institution and develops the full effectiveness of the most important resource of the institution, "its people". Training must be measurable in terms of the institution's requirements, must be task and result-orientated, must focus on improving the specific skills and abilities required to perform the task and must contribute to the accomplishment of the institution's goals. Furthermore, Erasmus &Van Dyk [4], and Erasmus et al. [5], argue that training is the systematic process of modifying the knowledge, skills and behaviour of the employees in order for the institution to reach its objectives. Training is task orientated, as the focus is on the work performed within the institution, which is based on the job description of the individual and the requirements of the particular job which determine the employee in an institution when work standards are low due to lack of knowledge or skills, and poor employee attitude.

Training is seen by Goldstein & Ford [1], as a means of providing skills and opportunities to employees and must be designed and developed meticulously to ensure that the expectations of the institution and individuals are met. For the purpose of this paper, training is defined as the intentional process to change the through learning, which results in improved performance to reach the goals and objectives of the institution. Development is achieved when employees are trained and equipped with knowledge and skills to carry out specific task. Development is a process; an employee can continue to develop himself until they retire from their position. Development can be defined as a process of improving one's skills and knowledge to the betterment of one's ability to carry out specific task.

REASONS FOR PERSONNEL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Scot & Bohlander [6], believe that training has become progressively important to the achievement of modern organisations. This is due to that fact that institutions often compete on the basis of their employee's experience, knowledge that give them an edge over their competitors. Training and employee development plays an important role in cultivation and establishment the competencies of a firm, and in this way has become part of the backbone of strategic management. In addition, rapidly changing of technology such as the current 4th industrial revolution known as the 4IR pushes that employers provide training and develop their employees to improve their skills, knowledge and abilities. It is vital that managers and employees continue to go under training to develop themselves in order to equip themselves to be able to handle new and more demanding assignments placed by their clients. Stredwick [7], provides that the essential aim of training and employee development is to assist institutions to meet their organisational objectives by increasing the value of the major resource, which are employees.

The other main three objective of training employees are to develop their competencies, secondly, is to help employees remain relevant on their position and, lastly, help them grow in the organisation as far as possible so that its future needs for human resource can be met from within the organisation. It is also too common for employees to be sent on training courses as a result of an attractive brochure without considering the real needs of the employee or the implications of the training. Masuku [8], argued that most municipalities if not all considers training to be one of the most vital strategy for institutions to help employees gain more relevant skills, abilities and knowledge to meet the environmental challenges. This is because skilled workers are at the heart of global competitiveness. The purpose of skills development is to encourage employers to use the workplace as an active development environment, provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new competences, provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience and to employ persons who find it difficult to be employed.

THE EFFECTS OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ON EMPLOYEES

Mello [9], stated that employee training has received more attention over recent years than over the past few decades. Institutions have realised that effective training programmes can assist with the improvement of productivity within institutions. Training managers should be aware of the current and future trends within an institution in order to plan effectively for the future of the institution. For any institution to complete effectively in the 21st century, the institution needs a skilled workforce that is innovative, driven and understands the environment in which it functions.

Ivancevich [10], provide that training is very vital for newly appointed employees in an organisation. He further argued that training is an attempt to help improve current or future performance of employees and of the organisation. Training helps alter the behaviour and understanding of employees in a direction that will achieve organisational goal. This is also supported by Erasmus and Van Dyk [4], who also agreed that training aims to improve employee performance which automatically have a direct impact on the overall performance of the organisation usually when work standards are low because of lack of knowledge or skills and poor attitudes among employees or groups in an institution. Nel et al [11], provide list of some of the benefits to employees if training and development had been conducted properly. These benefits include that:

• It leads to improved profitability when employees understand their role and expectation by the employer,
• It helps improves employees job knowledge and skills at all levels of the organisation,
• It helps employees to identify the goal of the organisation,
• It automatically helps create a better corporate image,

CHALLENGES OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

A successful training and developed employees provide a strong impact on the performance of the section and consequently on the performance of the organisation as a whole. However, there are various factors influencing training and development of employees in any organisation and these challenges could include, supervisors, managers, content of the training and how it is being done. Below are some of the training and development challenges facing employees in organisations.

Individual Factors
This is well known that as long as people are involved in any activity or process, they automatically influence the environment or the process they are experiencing. This also apply in the situation where employee training is taking place. Individuals themselves can affect the aim of the training by their own conduct, character and commitment to whatever is happening during the training process. This mean that employees by their positive attitude towards something can contribute to its success while on the other hand their negativity can contribute to its failure (Birdi [12].

Human Resource Policy
The other challenge faced by organisations are the excessive number of training programmes which employees has to attend which are linked to the Human Resource policy of institutions. This challenge is very disturbing to the newly appointed employees as they are required to be familiar with the organisation process and culture. The excessive number of training to be attended by employees has an effect on the main aim of training which was supposed to be skills development and conduct change (Jehanzeb & Beshir [13].

Organizational factors
No organisation can perfectly operate effectively without the proper support of its executives, thus, the absence of managerial support can restrain or negatively affect the impact of training in any organisation. Management must always provide their full support towards this initiative if they wish to see their organisation achieving its goal Birdi [12].

Other Factor
It had been proven that properly arranged training will in most instances produce effective results to both employees and the organisation, but there are some element which has to be integrated in order to ensure that such results are achieved. Jehanzeb and Driskell, argued that the kind of training conducted, training expertise and content provided also equally affect the results of the training. Meaning if these elements are left unattended could distort the whole purpose of the training and the goal of the training could fail (Jehanzeb & Beshir [13].

METHODS OF TRAINING

Different types of training methods are used in many organizations today to train employees. Masuku [8], explains that the commonly known and used training and development programmes by organisations are either On-the-job training or Off-the-job training.

On-the-job training
On-the-job training (OTJ) is a type of training conducted by giving training to employees by doing an actual work with senior employees in the organisations. During this type of training employees are required to do an actual work, however being supervised by a senior member of the organisation. For example, during the training time frame, the trainees will get the direct involvement of using organisation actual tools such as machinery, equipment, devices, materials, and so forth. This type of training is mostly effective to both junior and senior employees who just started in a new position. On-the-

job training includes internship, job rotation, apprenticeship and so forth. This type of training is so effective that most dedicated employees are able to master the actual work done by senior members in short period of time unlike a theoretical training. This type of training is mostly offered to engineering students who need to have a practical feel of what they have theoretically learned at school or studied.

Off-the-job training

Off-the-job training on the other hand is completely different from the on-the-job training where trainees are trained at the actual place of work doing an actual practical work. Off-the-job-training is a kind of training which is organised and conducted far from the original work environment for a specific period of time approved by the manager of the trainee. This type of training is very useful also as it gives the trainees peace of mind to temporarily isolate himself and forget a bit about the work environment stress and focus on the training itself. Mostly this type of training is conducted for employees who have already been in the organisation system. Management also uses this type of training when they need to improve their understanding and align themselves with the new advancement of the over changing global work environment. This type of training requires a highly skilled trainer to facilitate the programme as most of the discussion during the training are for knowledge sharing and critical problem solving.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a qualitative approach. Du Toit & Van Der Waldt [14] argued that qualitative approach is used to gain an understanding of underlying motives, opinions and motivations. Qualitative research helps to obtain the insights about the phenomena in question and is flexible in the sense that it helps in identifying the missing part of what is unknown or partially known (Ghauri & Grönhaug [15], Population can be defined as a group of individuals who share the set of common traits and where sampled can be extracted from. The study population was all municipal officials of one municipality in South Africa. The sample of the study was classified into three categories which were General Workers (level 1-3), Officers (level 4 -8) and Managers (9 -12). All participants in the study were voluntary and they were all presented with their rights as participants. All ethical factors were presented and observed during the data collection phase. Primary data was collected from a sample of 20 participants from the municipality. The sampling strategy adopted for the study was purposive sampling. Masilo [16] denotes that the judgemental sampling is the most common sampling method when a researcher wishes to establish the quality

information from experts. In this study the researcher chose a sample on the basis of what the researcher considers typical units. In other words, only respondents who the researcher believes that they would be knowledgeable about the topic under study were sampled, where any other respondents might not be able to provide the data. Primary data was collected by means of using semi structured interviews. Secondary data was collected from published articles, books, and reports. The collected data was analysed following the conversation analysis which is about analysis of spoken words like analysing interview data.

RATIONAL OF THE STUDY

The results of the study will assist municipal management to follow correct processes when implementing training and development programmes to help employees improve on their performance.

RESEARCH LIMITN ATION /IMPLICATION

The results of the study can voluntarily be adopted by other municipalities in the country, South Africa but considering the fact that the results might not be effective as the ones received from the actual municipalities where the research was conducted. The reason being that the participants will be a different group of people with different perception about the strategy and from different environment. The second limitation to the research project is that because of the ongoing political instability in the province the municipality requested that the name of the municipality should not be made known, and for that reason the name of the municipality was omitted from the research to protect their identity and also to adhere to their ethical right.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study focused on two objectives which it wished to establish. The study objectives are discussed below extracted from the results of the study. Secondary data and primary data was discussed in order to achieve the below listed objectives.

To established the main reasons for the municipality to conduct training and development

It is well known that every organisation need to conduct training and develop its employees in order to increase the production level for the organisation. Du Toit and Van der Waldt [14], argued that the public sector has a responsibility towards the public to increase the general

welfare. The community expects the best possible management processes and service from public institutions. Different authors agreed that training lessens learning time and helps to obtain higher productivity. Masuku [8], provides that it is a given fact that no employee irrespective of their work experience and academic qualifications is fully equipped for any task in an institution without further training. He further argued that not only junior employees or those joining the work place for the first need training but even senior official has permanent need for continuous training due to ever-continuous changes in the global market. Masuku [8], further added that employers need to understand that training is not there only to improve employee's skills, abilities and knowledge regarding their administrative duties but rather it goes beyond that where it looks into areas such as the acquisition of certain virtues and attitudes like diligence, willingness, integrity, loyalty and responsibility is also within its scope.

Du Toit and van der Waldt [14], argued that South Africa is a developing country which has just tasted democracy in the past 24 years, meaning that its resources are still extremely limited and it is of cardinal importance for local government to utilize the existing resources effectively in order to achieve greater satisfaction for all South Africans. Cloete and Mokgoro [17], support Du Toit and Van der Waldt [14] statement by further providing that the new government would have to rely heavily on the public service to implement new policy and facilitate development due to budget constraints. The South African government has taken a great move by introducing the National School of Government as an institution responsible for coordinating and facilitating all compulsory training government training programmes for both National and provincial government. They mentioned that the alteration of the current attitude and capacity of the public service is therefore fundamental. The current education and training system is largely focused towards training people for a control-orientated public service for the purpose of the future human resource expectation and demand.

The majority of respondents who were in the senior management indicated that the municipalities continue to offer training and developing their employees because workers are assisted to focus on their jobs, while productivity is increased, employee confidence is built and it helps improve the overall performance of the organisation as it enables team development and contributing to better organisation morale. They further eluded that training helps employees to keep informed of the current new job-related information, thereby contributing significantly to better customer service which is a key factor during service delivery. Furthermore, employees are assisted to improve on their knowledge, abilities and skills which is the factor to every successful organisation. However, participants indicated that the main challenge for them is that the municipality does not use training audit to determine the impact it had on employees and the those in need of training. Chapter 10 of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 Section 195(h) indicates that good human resource management and career development to maximise human potential must be developed. This principle enforces to ensure that both public and private sector develop their employees for the betterment of the country as a whole. It should be noted that employees can job hop from one organisation to another therefore all companies are required to ensure that they train and invest in developing their employees. Training and developing employees does not only provide benefits for the employee but also the employer

To present the specific and detailed operational guidelines for successful implementation of training and development programs

Respondents indicated that training and developing employees is the backbone of any successful organisation. Establishing a compulsory employee training program in a municipality will provide with heightened standards as well as improved productivity, efficiency, and profitability. Majority of respondents provided that Municipalities should provide training to their employees when there is a need to do so not just to spend the given budget as mostly done by many government department towards the end of the financial year. They further indicated that trainings should be thoughtful and impactful with a specific purpose in mind, and this is what their municipality focus on when providing training to their employees. The participants indicated that to have effective employee development plans and training programs, the employer must first have clearly defined goals and identify which employees could fit those roles and benefit from the training. They also eluded that once succession planning is in place then they can implement the training program as a part of each individual employee's pathway so that it is personalized to their needs and they can be more effective in their roles after the training. They argued that a good employee training program provides multiple benefits for both the organization and the employees.

With regard to perception on how training and development should being conducted. The respondents further revealed that their municipality has a process they follow to ensure that their training is implemented successfully, their claim that their process first identify

skills gap through using the workplace skills plan, check if the training is needed, evaluation of service delivery implementation plan and the Integrated development plan (IDP). The projects within the IDP is also linked to the municipality's budget. Checking what is needed on the IDP before considering conducting any training. The strategy used by the municipality to conduct training and development is that they also ensure that their processes are managed by qualified personnel with skills to analyse processes and ensure that all is done in an effective manner. Failure to follow the above provided steps will eventually damage the confidence of employees and consequently demotivate them to participate in any other training arranged for them by the municipality.

CONCLUSION

Training and development has been a continuous challenge to manage for many organisations over centuries and still is today as many organistion are still struggling to manage and implement an effective training and development programs. Training and Development challenges has negative impact on the overall performance of any organisation as employees might find it difficult to improve on their performance without proper training at their institutions. Furthermore, training and development strategies need to always be revised to keep up with the continuous development and changes taking place daily in our communities. The new demands from clients require knowledgeable employees to meet their demands daily, which only can be met by ensuring that employees are trained to meet the expectation of the clients.

The study had revealed that many employees in the municipality expressed interest in the implementation of the training and development indicating that an effective implemented training and development have a tendency of producing better results for the organisation and also for the employees. However other expressed their disappointment on the way in which the system is being implemented in the municipality indicating that those in position to ensure that all is done effectively never put any effort to see those objectives of implementing the system been achieved. However, lack of training audit record is another challenging factor to this municipality. Employee's performance has a direct impact on the overall performance of organisation therefore if proper measures are taken to ensure that employee are assisted to improve their performance through training and development programmes it will help ensure that the aim of the training is achieved. However continuous ignorance of these is just a receipt for failure as most frustrated employee must resort in looking for jobs elsewhere where they can be given relevant and aligned training to help them grow as employees.

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